

with McClellan to make this third story a very successful one for this remarkable community.

Thank you very much. And I'm sorry for the weather inconvenience.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. at McClellan Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to BRAC, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

Remarks at the Yolo Basin Wetlands in Davis, California

November 15, 1997

Thank you very much. You can't imagine how much I wanted to get out of cold, rainy, windy Washington, DC, to come to California. *[Laughter]* But after all, this is a wetlands event.

I want to, first of all, thank Sarah for her introduction. Didn't she speak well? *[Applause]* She was terrific, I thought. And listening to her recount the experiences of the last several years of her life I think was as good a statement as any as could be made about so many of you who are here and the work you have done to make this day come to pass. I want to thank all of you very much.

I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to your secretary of natural resources, Doug Wheeler, and two people who came from Washington with me, our Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Rich Rominger, who is from Yolo County, and he's already been mentioned, but our Deputy Secretary of the Interior, John Garamendi, who grew up not far from here, and they've both done a terrific job for you back there.

I thank John Walker for his statement. We were dedicating a wetland in Arkansas once, a few years ago, on a much warmer day. And I was a Governor, and he was a president, but after all, I'm term-limited and he can go on forever. *[Laughter]*

I'm very glad to be here with all of you. I want to thank Robin and Greg for showing me around the area and giving me a chance to look at some of the birds and just see what you've done here. I asked him how many ducks and geese there were going to be here and whether you had any eagles or ospreys

or egrets, and I got a pretty good rundown on it.

And I have to say that I have been, as you have heard already, a big supporter of these kinds of endeavors. I thank the people here from the California Waterfowl Association, and I do want to say a special word of thanks to two groups with which I have been associated, first, the folks from the Corps of Engineers. They have not only changed their image, they've changed their reality. They're working hard not only to give us water projects but to give us the kind of environmental conservation that we need for the long run. And I thank you very much, Colonel, and I thank all the people from the Corps for what you've done.

And let me just echo what was said earlier. I'm very proud of my very long association with Ducks Unlimited. They've done a wonderful job in helping us to bring waterfowl back to our State and they do a great job in this country.

Finally, I'd like to say a word of appreciation to Vic Fazio, who is clearly one of the most outstanding Members of the United States Congress in either party. If we had a hundred more people like him, America would have no problem. He is a very good man. I want to thank Vic not only for his work here but for the general efforts he's made, along with Senator Boxer and Senator Feinstein and John Garamendi, for our efforts in the Bay Delta area and the work that we are doing to try to guarantee the long-term needs of California for water supply, as well as water quality, habitat preservation, and environmental progress. And that's very, very good.

Let me say, I wanted to be here today because to me this project is the embodiment of not only what we should be doing as Americans on the edge of a new century but how we should be doing it. We worked very hard to create a country where things were working for ordinary Americans, where we were coming together across the lines that divide us, and where we can be strong enough to continue to lead the world in the right direction. And that bridge that I talked about all the time I'm trying to build to the 21st century is going pretty well. We've got the strongest economy in a generation; crime and

welfare are dropping. And our water quality, our air quality, our food safety, they're all improving. We are moving in the right direction.

One of the biggest challenges we will have to continue to face during the entire lifetime of all the children that are here is the challenge of trying to grow our economy and lift our standard of living while improving, not diminishing, our environment. That is critical. A great deal of the history of 20th century California is a story of this battle. And the truth is, for most of the 20th century, not only in California but throughout America, whenever people thought about this, they either thought, "I'm going to develop the economy; the environment will take care of itself," or they felt for a long time, "It's unfortunate that we have to give up so much of our environment, but it's a necessary price we have to pay to continue to raise our living standards." Now we know that is a false choice. And indeed, we understand that over the long run if we want to preserve our ability to increase our standard of living, we have to preserve our national environment and all the things that go with it.

Just for example, Greg Schmid and I were talking about this project and how the more you do these projects, the more you're going not only to have what you came here for today but what you cannot see; you will lose less water in rain runoff, and you will over time rebuild the aquifers that are below the land, that no one sees and most people don't think about. But that will enable you to sustain your population and to sustain your economic activity.

So again I say, I wanted to come here today because this is a huge success. You're doing the right thing, and you're doing it in the right way. And that's the second point I want to make. If we haven't learned anything in our country in the last few years, I hope we have learned we do not get very far when we just stand off and shout at each other and fight and argue all the time. But we can do anything if we roll up our sleeves and get down to work and honestly listen to people who have different experiences, different perspectives, and different genuine interests. That's what you've done here. You've

been able to bring everybody together, and I really feel good about that.

Here we are in the shadow of Sacramento. We see the farmlands here, and I promise you, when I crossed that levee today, I thought I was back home in eastern Arkansas, and I kept waiting for somebody to give me my waders and a gun to go duck hunting. [Laughter]

What you have done today was based on the cooperation of State, Federal, and local governments, based on public—[inaudible]. That's how we ought to be dealing with all America's problems. You can't name a single problem we've got in this country that we could not make the kind of progress on we're celebrating today if we didn't approach it the way you have approached this.

And I would implore you to think about what you can do and what you can say to people in this State, and your friends and family members and neighbors all around America, to take this attitude and this approach, not only to our environmental problems but to all others.

You've been working on this since the late eighties. You ought to be very proud of it. But you ought to also draw confidence from this that there is no challenge facing this country that we cannot meet if we will just do what you have done here. I am so proud of you—I know that you believe in it or you wouldn't be standing out here in the cold and rain listening to me talk.

I've just got to make one other point that I think is very important to you here in California. Three years ago we helped to launch the historic Cal-Fed partnership to try to end the water wars and restore the environment and ensure clean and reliable water for generations to come. I just signed legislation, as Vic Fazio said, that makes \$85 million in downpayments to match funds that the California voters approved to restore their rivers and marshes in the valleys. In 2 months the Cal-Fed program will recommend a blueprint for moving forward with all of our partners in the way I said. We'll be working on habitat restoration, flood protection, integrated from the beginning into all projects designed to meet the other needs of the area. We're going to do it right. And again I say I'm very grateful to Vic Fazio and to Senator

Boxer, Senator Feinstein, and of course, to John Garamendi for their work in this whole process.

And let me also say that—I want to say a word of thanks to the Corps of Engineers and others who have done all the work in rebuilding after last year's floods. Within the next few weeks, the Corps will finish all remaining repairs. It's the most extensive flood reparation ever done in this short of time and another reason we should thank the Corps of Engineers for what they've done here.

We're working hard across America on projects like this. We're making progress in reclaiming the Florida Everglades, in restoring Lake Tahoe, in saving Yellowstone. We have funds in this latest bill, in our balanced budget plan, to continue this work. But I now can go around the country and talk to other people about what you've done here and tell them you believe in it so much you all showed up and stayed in the wind and the rain in sunny California. *[Laughter]*

Well, I've seen the wetlands here today, and some of you may have seen more than you wanted to see. But I'll tell you what else I've seen: I've seen a glimpse of America's future, and I like it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Douglas P. Wheeler, California Secretary for Resources; John Walker, chairman of the board, Ducks Unlimited; Sarah Jullian, volunteer, Robin Kulakow, executive director, and Greg Schmid, farmer, Yolo Basin Foundation; and Col. Dorothy F. Klasse, USA, District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Sacramento *November 15, 1997*

Thank you very much. Eleni, thank you very much for your remarks and for the hard work that you have done. Thank you, Angelo and Sophia. Congressman Matsui, when he stood up and said that he was speaking on behalf of the Tsakapoulous family, I thought we were taking ethnic diversity a little far there. *[Laughter]* But you know me; as far as I'm concerned, it should have no limits. So I liked it.

I want to thank Bob Matsui and Vic Fazio for the wonderful work that they do in Congress. I have wished on many days—privately, so I might as well say publicly—that a higher percentage of people in both parties were more like Bob Matsui and Vic Fazio. They always try to find common ground, and they're always willing to stand tough and fight if necessary. They get a lot done, and they're always looking to the future. And I'm very grateful to them.

I'm also glad to be back in Sacramento and back here with your mayor, who has been a good friend of mine and a good leader. And I thank him for that. And Phil Angeledes, good luck to you in your endeavor this year. Most people should trust you to handle the money. *[Laughter]* You've had a lot of experience at it. *[Applause]* Thank you. I'd also like to thank my good friend Dan Dutko for coming all the way from Washington, DC, to be part of the Democratic Party's efforts today. And let me thank all of you.

Congress has just gone home, and this was a remarkably good year; It's a 2-year congressional session; we have a lot to do next year; but we did pass the first balanced budget in a generation. We ratified the chemical weapons treaty, which will help to protect our children and our grandchildren and involves a lot of what is at stake in Iraq today. We made progress on expanding NATO in ways that will give us a chance to have a 21st century where Europe is a source of peace and prosperity, not a cause for war that involves Americans. We passed a wonderful adoption bill that I will sign in the next few days to facilitate adoptions in many ways in America. We passed a huge increase in medical research in all kinds of areas and the best package to help families with diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association, since the discovery of insulin 70 years ago. So it was a very good year for the American people in the Congress.

What I'd like to talk to you about a little bit today is how that year is a part of what we've been doing for the last 5 years and what I hope to be doing for the next 3, how it fits in with what we celebrated just a few moments ago when I went out, literally, to the wetlands area today—*[laughter]*—to celebrate this joint partnership to try to restore